

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2309

October 6, 2011

The Honorable Tom Vilsack  
Secretary  
United States Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Avenue SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack,

I am writing to urge prompt action to ensure that funding for predatory wolf trapping under the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Services (APHIS) remains available until the gray wolf is delisted from the Federal Endangered Species List. For the past 20 years, this program has successfully protected Minnesota citizens and livestock from the threat of wolf predation. However, on September 30<sup>th</sup>, this important program ran out of funding. I thank you for your recent action to extend funding for three months, but urge that you maintain this funding beyond that time until the gray wolf is delisted from the Endangered Species List.

The Endangered Species Act is a valuable and powerful tool for protecting our country's most vulnerable species. In the case of the gray wolf in Minnesota, it has been extremely successful. Since the gray wolf was listed in 1973, its population in Minnesota has risen from near extinction to 3,000, more than double the minimum population for species stability under the Endangered Species List.

This larger gray wolf population means additional threats to Minnesota citizens and livestock are possible. The APHIS wolf-trapping program has been extremely important, successfully managing wolf populations and mitigating human-wolf interactions.

Currently, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is considering removing the Minnesota gray wolf from the Endangered Species List, at which point management of the wolf population will be transferred to the state of Minnesota and the APHIS trapping program will no longer be necessary. However, until the gray wolf is delisted, the APHIS trapping program remains a crucial tool for wolf population management. The current program in Minnesota costs about \$25,000 per month and helps maintain the livelihoods of hundreds of our farmers and livestock producers. I urge you take prompt action to ensure funding for this program remains in place until the gray wolf is removed from the Endangered Species List.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue for the state of Minnesota.

Sincerely,



Al Franken  
United States Senator